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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a new Head Start demonstration project which will focus on the acquisition of basic educational skills at the preschool level (e.g. positive attitudes toward learning, attention control, language skills) and at the elementary school level (e.g. basic academic skills, attention, memory). The first phase of the project, scheduled for completion in FY'78, involves the identification of 15 Head Start programs with existing exemplary basic skills programs reflecting a coordinated emphasis on curriculum, parent involvement, teacher attitudes and staff training, and continuity between preschool and elementary school learning and between school and home experiences. Phase I emphasizes the refinement and documentation of these existing Head Start models. Phase II, beginning in Fall 1979, will involve the development and testing of a variety of basic skills programs in selected field sites. These programs will emphasize a coordinated preschool-elementary school curriculum. Phase III, scheduled for FY'79, will focus on two research objectives: (1) to support the development of two new basic skills models spanning the developmental period from preschool through Grade 6, and (2) to design basic research studies with potential educational applications. The proposal includes guidelines for implementing the programs, budget information, and a timetable for the project. (BD)

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HEAD START BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS PROJECT

A RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE

Phase I Guidelines

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Administration for Children, Youth and Families will launch a new Head Start Project that will focus on basic educational skills within the context of its philosophy. This project is in response to the President's call for efforts to assist children in acquiring the basic skills they need to function successfully in a complex society. This pilot program will demonstrate effective approaches to enhancing and sustaining the acquisition of developmentally appropriate educational skills in a climate that supports the child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. By modifying and/or intensifying those Head Start experiences believed to lead to the acquisition of educational skills suited to the preschool level, the project will refine and document effective ways in which children acquire such skills in Head Start. Although these abilities will contribute to children's later academic learning, they also include skills in communication and problem-solving, as well as positive learning attitudes. By demonstrating ways in which Head Start can collaborate with elementary schools to design and implement early education programs that foster basic skills, this initiative builds on Head Start success over the past decade in providing children with developmentally appropriate experiences and in working with parents and elementary schools to reinforce the child's learning and to provide continuity in the child's life. This initiative will put forth a definition of basic educational skills that will build on our current understandings of Head Start and elementary schools in an attempt to enrich children's socio-emotional experiences, school readiness and later school achievement. Throughout the project, program demonstrations and linkages will illustrate different approaches and relationships among four essential elements: curriculum; parent involvement; teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training; and continuity.

A. Basic Educational Skills

The goal of Head Start is to bring about a greater degree of social competence[1] in children of low income families, regardless of race, economic circumstances, language and geographic location by providing a comprehensive child development program. Head Start addresses the child's total development within the context of his/her family and community.

Within the context of Head Start and its goals, developmentally appropriate educational skills[2] are those which are necessary for the later acquisition of skills and learning commonly recognized as reading, writing and mathematics, but which also include language, science, problem-solving and the development of positive attitudes toward learning. It is important to note that the specific skills and abilities encompassed by the concept "basic educational skills" increase in complexity and change as the child grows older and develops socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

Specific educational skills (e.g., reading or numerical computation) are built on a base of more general skills (e.g., gross and fine motor control, expressive communication, symbolic representation, perceptual discrimination, seriation and classification) that are acquired through broad experience in the preschool years. Thus, teaching in Head Start is not teaching the academic skills usually taught in the early grades. Because preschool children learn best by making use of concrete, visual and tactile experiences rather than by using abstract, symbolic or verbal information, a curriculum designed for building a foundation for later acquisition of educational skills cannot be a watered-down version of the elementary school curriculum.

[1] By social competence is meant the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health, nutritional needs, and other factors that enable a developmental approach to helping children achieve school readiness and the child's effective functioning in non-school settings of home and neighborhood.

[2] Examples of developmentally appropriate educational skills acquired during the preschool years include: appropriate levels of language comprehension and communication skills; counting as well as knowledge of quantitative concepts such as equivalence; color and shape discrimination; beginnings of recognition of letters and words; acquisition of specific information about the world; and development of learning attitudes, such as focused attention, task persistence, curiosity and a positive attitude toward learning.

For this project, educational skills are defined on two levels: preschool and elementary school. This distinction is made because there are important differences between preschool children and those in the elementary schools. These differences are also reflected in the literature on what contributes to educational skills.

Appropriate Basic Educational Skills at the Preschool Level consist largely of those abilities which are required as precursors to the more complex abilities necessary for social competence and formal academic school achievement. They are the attitudes and skills essential for life-long learning, and include, for example, continued interest in learning; the ability to understand and use language in speaking and listening to others; to begin to understand concrete relationships such as quantity, size and space; to discriminate between different shapes and colors; and to begin to recognize symbols, such as letters and words.

Appropriate Basic Educational Skills at the Elementary School Level are the developmentally appropriate extensions of earlier learnings. They may be expressed as grade-level competencies in a number of areas, including reading, writing, mathematics and science. They include, for example, the ability to use and understand increasingly complex language (speaking, listening and writing), mathematical reasoning, and investigatory and problem-solving approaches. They include essential organizational capabilities, such as an ability to pay attention, an ability to remember with increasing selectivity and for increasing periods of time, an adaptive learning style, appropriate coping strategies, and motivation to learn and achieve in school. Finally, they include the necessary instrumental skills such as arithmetic computation, word coding and decoding skills, and correct grammatical usage in written and spoken language.

B. Curriculum for Basic Skills

The Head Start Basic Educational Skills curriculum means mastering now the preschool work of doing and experiencing as the groundwork for social competence and formal academic learning. It does not mean implementing in Head Start what children do in first and second grade. The assumption of this project is that a program which fosters the acquisition of basic skills must not only be developmentally appropriate but must be implemented in the context of the philosophy of comprehensive services to children and families.

As the child explores the physical world with his or her eyes, ears and hands, the child begins to organize the experience in terms of abstract concepts and categories. For example, by physically sorting objects according to shape, color and

function, the child begins to develop the capacity to classify objects logically, and begins to construct alternative classifications without actually performing physical manipulations. Similarly, by physically arranging objects according to height or weight the child begins to understand transitive relationships (e.g., "greater than") and begins to understand the concept of a series. Though the child may learn to count before he/she grasps these concepts, they will only fully understand the meanings of numbers when those underlying logical relationships are mastered. Thus the acquisition of educational skills (numerical skills, in the present example) depends on a broad set of early experiences, and instruction in arithmetic is likely to have very different effects, depending on whether or not underlying skills are present. This concept of "readiness" is central to the Head Start basic skills curriculum. As with all learners, children will "get ready," or progress developmentally, in individual ways.

A Head Start basic skills program should design and implement an approach which attends to differences among children by:

- Identifying curriculum that reflects a stated philosophy of concern for the total child and an approach to teaching which recognizes the value of individualized instruction.
- Providing experiences that are appropriate to the developmental levels, interests and needs of the child.
- Providing a healthy physical and intellectual climate to enhance the social-emotional growth of the child.
- Fostering a positive self-concept, including self-concept as a learner.
- Identifying the child's weaknesses and building on his or her strengths.

A Basic Educational Skills program is based on the assumption that teaching requires sound knowledge of every child and providing a program suited to individual children. An individualized program does not mean isolating children or never working with children in groups, but does refer to planning carefully for each child. In addition to a knowledge of child development and approaches to teaching, this task necessitates knowledge of the specific developmental levels of the children and individualization of the child's educational program within a curriculum sequence of developmentally and educationally appropriate experiences.

Activities in the program include, for example, physical development and creative arts experiences in an integrated curriculum. As an illustrative example of the kinds of child outcomes that might be expected and of the types of program activities that will affect them, the enclosed two charts (Fig. 1, Examples of Age-Appropriate Child Outcomes in Basic Educational Skill Areas, Fig. 2, Examples of Age-Appropriate Teaching-Learning Activities in Basic Educational Skill Areas) suggest the many domains of educational skill development. Figure 1 defines child outcomes and skills; Figure 2 defines teaching-learning activities that might be used to promote skill acquisition. This organizational device is over-simplified and is given as an example only. It is assumed that there are other equally reasonable ways to analyze both. The purpose of the charts, however, is to show that skills prerequisite to reading skills, for example, are in fact acquired during the Head Start and kindergarten years, that the acquisition of successively complex skills is dependent upon earlier skills, and that classroom experiences can be structured so that they occur in ways which facilitate the acquisition and maintenance of developmentally appropriate basic educational skills in Phase I. See Figure 3 in Appendix A for an interpretation of teaching-learning activities with a curriculum focus.

II. PROGRAM DESIGN

The basic educational skills project is designed in three phases: Phase I, funded during FY'78, consists of a pilot effort in 15 Head Start sites, two of which must be bilingual; Phase II, to start in FY'79, will be a field demonstration in 31 sites; and Phase III, the research phase, to be launched during FY'79.

A. Phase I

(These guidelines are written for Phase I of the project.)[1] Phase I involves the selection of 15 exemplary, existing basic educational skills programs or models,[2] two of which must be bilingual, and all of which have evolved in on-going Head Start programs. These programs must have developed or have clearly demonstrated the capacity to implement models that reflect four essential project elements which will be part of all Head Start educational programs for the entire duration of this

[1] (Guidelines for Phases II and III will be developed based on extensive discussions with a variety of groups and the experience in Phase I sites.)

[2] A "model" in the context of the Basic Educational Skills project is a well-thought out education component which includes the four elements, curriculum, parent involvement, teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training, and continuity, and which can be documented and eventually disseminated.

research and demonstration initiative:

1) curriculum
2) parent involvement
3) teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training
4) continuity

Phase I will focus on the Head Start period to enable the sites to refine and pilot test their models and to develop planning linkages with the elementary schools.

Our approach to the selection of Phase I sites is to identify Head Start programs that already have demonstrated the capacity to implement an exemplary approach to basic educational skills at the preschool level. Head Start grantees must have the potential during the one year period of Phase I to refine their approach into a well implemented model program that, subject to further refinement in future years, could be disseminated to other Head Start programs. Phase I sites will be selected and funded prior to September 30, 1978. Based on their performance during Phase I, selected Head Start programs will be funded to continue in Phase II of the field experiment. At that time, the Head Start grantee will be expected to develop, with the elementary schools, a collaborative program that goes from preschool through the elementary grades (see Phase II description below). No more than 12 of the 15 sites that participate in Phase I are expected to continue in Phase II.

The longitudinal nature of the project during Phase II and the need for linkages with the elementary schools calls for at least 60 four-year-olds in Head Start who will enter kindergarten in no more than two feeder elementary schools. If the specific Head Start centers and classrooms proposed for this project do not meet this criteria at the time of application, specific plans should be outlined as to how this will be possible by the Fall 1979 (see criteria in Appendix B).

The emphasis in Phase I is on the refinement and documentation of the existing Head Start model. The programs must reflect all aspects of the four elements. The development of new program approaches is not expected. The Head Start models will need to be refined to the point that they can provide a basis for a coordinated educational skills intervention with the elementary schools. Training and technical assistance support will be made available to sites. By the end of Phase I, the model should show clear potential for eventual dissemination to other sites.

Phase I will begin in Fall 1978 and will last for one year. Twelve of the fifteen Phase I sites will have the opportunity to continue in Phase II. Funding of approximately $60,000 - $80,000 per site is currently projected.

B. Phase II

Phase II involves mounting the field experiment to develop and test a variety of basic educational skills approaches in Head Start and elementary school. The primary purpose of the field experiment is to determine the impact on children's learning of different combinations of four variables, or elements: 1) curriculum; 2) parent involvement; 3) teacher attitudes and behaviors/training; and 4) continuity.

Starting in the Fall 1979, 31 local Head Start programs, working in cooperation with local elementary schools, will be competitively selected to implement a multi-year program following children from Head Start through the early elementary years. All 31 sites will implement the four project elements: curriculum; parent involvement; teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training; continuity.

Up to twelve sites may be programs that participated in Phase I. 15 sites will implement basic educational skills programs developed by theoreticians and/or practitioners that have been field-tested. All models must include a curriculum that is suitable for children from preschool through sixth grade; however, this is not a model developed within the local Head Start program or school system. This aspect is an educational approach reflecting a variety of theoretical and practical applications of developmental orientations toward basic educational skills that involves five sponsors working in 3 sites each. It is also anticipated that a third group of 4 sites will implement two educational skills models that are the products of applied research being instituted as part of this initiative.

To explore the important learning shifts that occur from grades 3-6, sites will be randomly assigned to one of two continuity treatments:

A. Head Start through third grade; or
B. Head Start through sixth grade.

While sites in group A will be encouraged to develop a continuous basic skills curriculum through grade six, they will only be required to do so through grade three. Special funding and training and technical assistance can only be focused on the earlier period. Sites in group B will be required to develop continuity of the developmentally oriented basic educational skills curriculum. Group B sites will be funded through sixth grade and will receive special training and technical assistance during that period. Both groups A and B will be evaluated through sixth grade.

Selection criteria will be the result of further project planning, but criteria similar to Phase I are under consideration. The elementary school(s) at each site will need to demonstrate an acceptable educational strategy for involving the total school in the basic educational skills effort, without diluting the emphasis on fostering the educational achievement of the Head Start focal children.

It will be necessary that programs in the experimental project enroll children in Head Start the year prior to entry into kindergarten. Thus, only Head Start sites where the children are eligible to enter kindergarten in elementary schools can participate in the project.

C. Evaluation[1]

The Phase I year will be devoted primarily to evaluation planning, collection of formative data on the models in Phase I sites, instrument selection for Phase II, finalizing procedures for Phase II collection of base line data, and selection of a comparison group for Phase II. Formal evaluation of the field experiment will begin in the Phase II year, starting in the Fall 1979 with the first wave (or cohort) of children entering Head Start. Three waves of children will be followed from Head Start through sixth grade. The second wave of children will enter Head Start in the Fall 1980. The third and final wave will begin Head Start in the Fall 1981.

Careful evaluation of the programs and their impact will occur at each successive grade level, beginning with accomplishments during the preschool period. The evaluation will focus on an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of the basic educational skills programs and on the implementation and the effect of the four essential elements: curriculum; parent involvement; teacher attitudes and behaviors/training; and continuity. Outcomes to be assessed will parallel the basic skills domains of language acquisition, reading, writing, mathematics, science, problem-solving, and learning attitudes.

One comparison group for the field experiment will consist of a random sample of 30 Head Start programs across the country. No special intervention program will be initiated during the Head Start or subsequent school years. A formative and summative evaluation will be carried out to identify what activities actually take place in the comparison sites using the four elements (curriculum, parent involvement, teacher attitudes and behaviors/training and continuity) and examining the educational outcomes identifed above. A second comparison group will consist of Head Start eligible children who do not attend Head Start but who enter the same elementary schools as the Head Start children in the comparison sites. The present plan is to assign children in the comparison sites randomly to Head Start or no treatment (defined as no Head Start treatment since, based on past experience, some of these children can be expected to attend other preschools). The no treatment comparison children would be tested periodically from kindergarten through sixth grade.

[1]The evaluation description is highly preliminary. The evaluation design will be further clarified over the next few months. Phase I grantees will be notified around the time of funding as to how the evaluation will affect them and what activities they will have to carry out.

This evaluation design permits ACYF to combine the comparison group for the basic skills experiment with a previously planned evaluation of the Head Start education component.

The evaluation will focus on four major questions:

1. What combinations of program elements contribute to the attainment of basic skills for different children?

2. How does children's attainment of basic skills in the special experimental projects compare with the children's achievement in Head Start programs and schools that are studied in conditions of natural variation?

3. How much does preschool experience contribute to basic skills achievement at various stages of the child's development and learning?

4. What educational shifts in the learning of basic skills occur between third and sixth grade for children who have participated in Head Start?

D. Phase III Research Effort

In addition to the field experiment, the initiative involves a small scale research effort to be initiated in FY'79. The research has two objectives. The first is to support the development of two new basic educational skills models spanning the developmental period preschool through sixth grade. The second is to undertake a limited number of targeted and basic research efforts that have the potential for future application in improving basic educational skills. Further analysis is necessary to decide on the research priorities. Examples of research topics under consideration include: the relationship of auditory discrimination to later reading abilities; the influence of cognitive style on the acquisition of basic skills; teacher-child interaction (e.g., teacher attitudes and behaviors in communications transactions with disadvantaged youngsters and impact on language acquisition and reading skills); and parent-child-school interaction (e.g., in terms of factors influencing the child's learning attitudes).

III. PROGRAM GOALS

A number of expectations regarding the outcomes of the overall pilot effort and possible approaches to reaching these goals are listed below. (For specifics of Phase I, see page 11).

A. Define appropriate replicable activities and curriculum at the preschool level that are developmental in approach and are related to the acquisition of educational skills.

The pilot programs in Phase I will select, refine, and document for eventual replication the curriculum and activities which enhance the acquisition of educational skills. Curriculum activities must encourage and foster curiosity and pleasure in learning, and must be geared toward maintaining and enhancing children's interest in understanding the world around them. In addition, the curriculum must focus on developing of the child's process skills, such as observing and questioning, and on the child's acquisition and maintenance of positive learning attitudes, such as:

- self-esteem as a learner
- motivation
- curiosity
- initiative
- purposefulness
- persistence
- task completion
- interest in further learning

B. Identify the state of the art in the field of basic skills education for purposes of dissemination.

The program design will incorporate those principles of child development and early childhood education set forth in Part I of these guidelines. Four program elements are viewed as central to the acquisition of educational skills, 1) curriculum, 2) parent involvement, 3) teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training, and 4) continuity, and will be required at all sites. Based on further project planning, decisions will be made as to what specific features of each of the 4 elements will be mandated and what will be optional. The programs as implemented by local Head Start school staff and parents may determine the educational services are delivered.

C. Link the preschool and elementary school experiences of the child.

The pilot projects will develop and document strategies cooperation between preschool and schools in areas relating to the elements of curriculum, parent involvement, teacher attitudes and behaviors/staff training, and continuity. This cooperation is expected to result in much needed continuity of services for the children.

D. Enlist parents in helping their children develop educational skills through home and school related experiences and activities.

The pilot projects will develop, document, and evaluate various innovative methods for effective parent participation in the education of their children. This participation should include extending the classroom curriculum into the home in a manner reflective of experience-based and integrated learning. In addition, this participation should include bringing relevant ideas or materials from the home into the classroom to be used as part of the educational skills curriculum and activities.

An integral part of this effort should be the development and implementation of a parent and teacher training program focusing on methods for bringing the parents and home experiences into the classroom as well as bringing classroom activities into the home.

IV. PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE I

These guidelines are for programs who are developing proposals to be submitted to ACYF. The purposes of these guidelines are as follows:

- to delineate the required components of a Phase I Pilot Project and to specify, when necessary, required implementation methods

- to provide specific information on the philosophy and proposed implementation of the Basic Educational Skills Project

The guidelines are divided into Head Start component areas which are required for the implementation of the Project. Each Head Start component (with the exception of Program Administration which encompasses the other components listed below) is parallel to one of the four project elements as follows:

HEAD START COMPONENTS	PROJECT ELEMENTS
Program Administration	all
Education	Curriculum
Parent Involvement	Parent Involvement
Training	Teacher Involvement
all	Continuity*

*The project element of Continuity should be addressed by each Head Start component.

Under each component are three subsections:

1. Basic Principles are general statements of philosophy pertaining to the component which must be addressed by all sites when designing activities within those areas.

2. Required Aspects are specific program activities or details which must be included within the component during the pilot years.

3. Suggested Activities are methods of implementing the Required Aspects and Basic Principles. Sites need not implement these activities; they may design their own means of accomplishing the required parts of the component.

Sites may design locally appropriate methods or activities within each component, provided that the Basic Principles are addressed and the Required Aspects included. Proposals for the pilot year should include details of proposed site activities designed to meet the program requirements. Regardless of the strategies decided upon for a full educational skills curriculum, the total package must be suitable to the particular needs of the locale. Local ethnic, cultural and language characteristics must be taken into account.

Each program must make available the full range of services normally provided to Head Start children. Full compliance with Head Start Performance Standards will be required.

A. Program Administration

Each pilot program must have sufficient staff for implementation of the educational skills program and must provide an administrative framework for insuring that all proposed tasks are implemented.

Basic Principles

1. Legal and fiscal responsibility for grant funds will reside with the Head Start grantee.

2. A system for planning, implementing and documenting the program will be put in place.

3. Support staff will be hired to carry out the program.

4. The regular Head Start staff will be trained in early education. Preference will be given to programs with staff who have a CDA credential, a B.A. in child development or early childhood education or be participating in a CDA training program.

5. A system for periodic contact with the elementary schools will be developed and implemented.

Required Aspects

1. Staff hired for this Project must reflect the skill necessary to implement the four essential elements of the Project and be able to function in both Head Start and school settings. At a minimum a full-time Basic Educational Skills project coordinator with background and experience in early childhood and elementary education, knowledgeable in the field of child research and evaluation, curriculum development and program administration. This individual will be responsible for day-to-day administration of this project, curriculum development, contact with the elementary schools, and program documentation.

2. Contact must be made periodically with elementary school boards and appropriate school officials (administrators, principals, and teachers) and parents in elementary schools. In Phase II a sub-contract with the elementary school(s) serving the Head Start center(s) will be negotiated as a formal mechanism to facilitate the Head Start-elementary school collaboration.

3. A quarterly report documenting the program and the curriculum must be submitted. At a minimum the reports must isolate and record activities which were designed to enhance educational skills development and learning. At the end of Phase I, the total program must have been documented in a comprehensive way, as follows:

    a. Program Organization
    b. Goals relating to educational skills
        1) Curriculum goals
        2) Parent Involvement goals
        3) Teacher behaviors and attitudes/Staff training goals
        4) Continuity goals
    c. Activities relating to educational skills
        1) Center activities
        2) Home activities
        3) Home-School activities
    d. Time spent on educational skills activities in the following settings:
        1) Center
            - supervised individual activity
            - supervised group activity
            - individual play
            - group play

2) Home
- parent-child interaction
- play with siblings
- play with peer group
- solitary activity

e. Impetus for basic skills activities in each of the above settings
1) adult-initiated
2) parent-initiated
3) other child initiated
4) self-initiated

f. Format and materials used in educational skills activities

g. Time and nature of staff training in basic skills curriculum and parent involvement in the Basic Educational Skills program

h. Contacts made with elementary schools and their use in planning

Suggested Activities

1. Grantee should inform parents and staff of both preschool and elementary school about the basic educational skills program and solicit their comments and ideas in all component areas.

2. Staff and parents should review documentation efforts to insure comprehensiveness.

3. Information-sharing sessions should be scheduled with elementary school personnel, including teaching staff, to report on the program variables and curriculum.

4. Consult with State Education Agency.

B. Education

Each pilot program must develop and implement an educational program based on a philosophy that results in the acquisition of developmentally appropriate basic educational skills.

Basic Principles

1. Staff and parents will define the acquisition of educational skills and learning attitudes as one of the goals of the education component and must reach agreement on the type of curriculum and activities best suited to the local program.

2. Each program will develop and implement a curriculum that fosters the acquisition of developmentally appropriate educational skills. Specific strategies for child and teacher activities in using the instructional materials must be described in relation to each curriculum area.

3. The education component and basic educational skills curriculum will be responsive to individual differences among children and will reflect a stated philosophy of concern for the total child, recognizing the value of individualized instruction.

4. The education component will foster positive self-concept and positive attitudes toward learning and will maintain and enhance children's understanding of the world around them.

5. Each program will attempt to develop and implement the curriculum with the cooperation of the elementary schools in order to insure the sharing of compatible philosophies and continuity for the children.

Required Aspects

1. The curriculum must include planned developmentally appropriate daily activities in language development, pre-reading, pre-writing, mathematics, science and problem-solving and must address the acquisition of positive learning attitudes.

2. Programs must consider the two Basic Educational Skills charts (see Figures 1 and 2) and amplify, revise, or rewrite them by the end of the quarter of Phase I according to their conceptualization of the curriculum activities and objectives for child outcomes.

3. A wide selection of instructional materials which allow an appropriate mix of activities supporting the child's learning in the home and classroom must be made available for use in the classroom.

4. A balance must be maintained between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities allowing the child the opportunity to explore independently and to make choices.

Required and Suggested Activities*

* See Appendix A for specific Basic principles, Required aspects and Suggested activities for a Basic Educational Skills Curriculum. The list is a comprehensive inventory of basic skills, and it is suggested that programs develop their own list for learning attitudes, and other basic skills areas.

C. Parent Involvement

Each program must establish the value of parents and staff working together and must recognize that parents are the primary caregiver of their children, having the most crucial nurturing and educating influence in their child's life.

Basic Principles

1. Efforts will be made through parents' contacts with classroom staff, parent groups and formal workshops or training sessions to enhance parents' self-concept as the nurturer and educator of their children and to reinforce their role as parents.

2. The emotional relationship and affective quality of interaction between parent and child will be maintained while developing each parent's effectiveness in enhancing their child's educational skills development.

3. The importance of the environment which each parent provides for their children will be considered fundamental in promoting learning situations for parental enhancement of educational skills development in their children.

4. Parents will be a major resource for insuring continuity between school and home as participants and observers in the classroom and as translators and facilitators of school activities to the home.

Required Aspects

1. Parents must be provided with a clear understanding of the pilot effort, the educational skills development curriculum, and their role in enhancing their children's learning at home.

2. Parents must be provided with training and program support for selected activities, materials, and appropriate themes that they can engage in with their children at home to extend and enhance the child's school experiences. This should include a major program activity that offers parents opportunities to read and tell stories to their own children. This should include parent training classes, provision of books and stories to take home, and supporting activities by the teacher in the classroom.

3. At the minimum, the program must include an organized plan for parent-child activities. Parents must be encouraged to bring activities into the classroom that are relevant to and that reinforce the child's home experiences and activities.

4. Regular parent meetings must be held that will focus on the parents' feelings and sense of working with their own children and on relating their experiences with teaching-learning activities to the curriculum in the classroom.

5. Materials such as children's books, puzzles, or other learning tools must be provided by the program for use in the home.

Suggested Activities

1. Parents and teachers should communicate regularly regarding the child through home visits, conferences, telephone contacts, newsletters, etc.

2. Materials used at school should be brought into the home and materials used at home should be brought into the school.

3. Elements of the cultural backgrounds of the children should be incorporated into the program including food, language, music, holidays, etc.

4. Workshops should be provided for parents in making, selecting and using educational materials, books, television, and family and community experiences to enhance their child's educational skill development at home.

D. Training

An on-going, regularly scheduled program of training activities relevant to the educational skills curriculum and to child development must be provided to all program participants, i.e. parents, teaching staff and volunteers.

Basic Principles

1. Regularly scheduled training sessions and workshops will be provided to participating staff and parents to enhance their understanding of the basic educational skills curriculum and of ways they might work cooperatively to provide learning experiences for their children.

2. Training will be individualized in recognition of the differing levels of experience among staff and parent groups and will include specific training for staff and parents separately as well as joint training on classroom and home strategies of curriculum implementation.

3. In-service training and workshops will be provided in such a way as to be perceived as relevant and valuable to the adult learners through an assessment of their individual interests, abilities, learning styles and knowledge base.

4. Resources for training will include the utilization on a regular basis of parents and staff within the local Head Start program, such as parents working with other parents.

Required Aspects

1. Training experiences relating to the educational skills curriculum must be closely linked to the CDA competencies and coordinated with any CDA training program which is currently planned or in effect.

2. Staff in-service training must include training that will focus on strategies for Phase I, including ways to work with parents in an on-going process in the classroom, in the home, in parent groups, in training settings, in other meaningful contacts such as conferences, telephone calls or meetings.

3. Staff and parents must be involved in training to increase their knowledge and understanding of how curriculum subject areas, such as language, reading, mathematics and science, fit into the overall goals of an educational skills development project that is being implemented within a comprehensive child development program.

4. Staff and parents must be involved in training that enhances their knowledge and understanding of learning theories, i.e., child developmental levels, children's individual differences, and the ways children learn.

5. On-going training must be provided to increase parents' and staff's familiarity with the elementary school which their children will attend, including their approach, curriculum, and planning procedures.

Suggested Activities

1. Review and discussion of curriculum should occur regularly by parents and staff.

2. The program should encourage staff and parent involvement in the CDA process, as Local Assessment Team members, or as CDA training participants or candidates.

3. Training should be offered that will involve staff and parents in systematic observation of their children's developmental progress and provide them with knowledge about age expectations, stages of learning and appropriate record-keeping techniques.

4. Training should be offered in developing coordinated activities, for example, reading the same book at the center and in the home.

V. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

It is expected that the Head Start Basic Educational Skills program will be duplicated by or adapted to other child development programs in the future. It is likely that other Head Start and child development programs will be interested in learning about these projects and wish to visit sites to observe the total process and operation. Therefore, each project must develop a feasible system for disseminating information about its program and responding to requests for visits.

VI. BUDGET

Phase I grants will receive approximately $60,000 - $80,000.

- These funds are intended to cover cost of hiring new staff for this project, transportation, relevant materials, cost of documenting material and final reports.

- These funds may not be used to replace current funds for program activities, or for construction costs.

- Projects will be expected to keep financial records to identify expenditures and remaining funds in the grant on a quarterly basis; other financial records may be required as part of the evaluation design.

Continued funding for the subsequent implementation years will be contingent upon:

1) successful implementation of a Basic Educational Skills Phase I program as outlined in these Guidelines;

2) a determination by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) to continue the overall experimental project; and,

3) a determination by ACYF that each Phase I model can significantly contribute to the overall Basic Educational Skills effort

Maintenance of effort for current activities is required; these grant funds may not be used to replace current funds for program activities.

VII. NON-FEDERAL SHARE

No local in-kind contribution in the form of non-federal share is required for this experimental project.

VIII. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A critical aspect of this project is the provision of technical assistance to the grantee. A training and technical assistance contract will be awarded to assist local sites to implement, refine and document the four elements in the project and to identify resources and materials which will enhance this pilot project in Phase I.

Timetable

DATE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
May 5, 1978	Guidelines are mailed to the Regions	ACYF Headquarters
May 9, 1978	Acting Regional Heads of ACYF appoint a Regional Staff Liaison for Basic Educational Skills Project.	Regional Office
May 17, 1978	Grantees are identified by the Regions, Guidelines and Workbooks for proposals are mailed to Grantees.	Regional Office
May 22, 1978	Regional Office and Headquarters selects review panels.	Headquarters and Regional Office
June 21, 1978	Sites return proposals to Regional Offices.	Regional Office
June 26-30, 1978	Review panels meet.	Regional Office
July 5-6, 1978	Regional Office sends recommendations to National Office.	Regional Office
July 10-12, 1978	National Office reviews proposals.	Headquarters
July 13-14, 1978	National Office tentatively selects 30 proposals for further review.	
July 19-28, 1978	Site visits by Headquarters and Regional Office teams if possible.	Headquarters and Regional Office
July 31, 1978	Recommendation for new demonstration submitted to the ACYF Commissioner for approval.	Headquarters
August 3, 1978	Regional Office Grants Management Process starts.	Regional Office
Prior to Sept. 30, 1978	Commissioner announces the new grantees.	Headquarters

Guide to Basic Educational Skills Curriculum

In addition to Basic Principles, Required Aspects and Suggested Activities, this appendix also includes examples of child outcomes which may be helpful in developing and implementing a basic educational skills curriculum.

The curriculum guidelines are divided into four curriculum areas:

Oral language	Mathematics
Pre-reading/Pre-writing	Science/Problem-solving

Oral Language Skills

Basic Principles

1. Language is probably the most important vehicle through which the child is educated and acculturated. In dealing with others the child encounters alternative perspectives on the world and thus becomes aware of his/her own perspective and able to reflect on his/her own mental processes.

2. Language and thought develop together. It is one way in which teachers can appraise the cognitive growth of the child.

3. Children must have a variety of experiences in order to comprehend and use language meaningfully. To communicate effectively, the child discovers that he must order and express his/her ideas logically; thus the need to communicate spurs the development of learning.

4. The nature of language per se, such as instruction in grammar or syntax is not considered an objective for early childhood; however, the inclusion of foreign language to learn common words and phrases and the awareness of dialects within a single language may be of interest and meaning when placed in the context of the child's immediate situation.

5. The language development curriculum should emphasize oral language acquisition and competence, language comprehension, communication, increased vocabulary, word fluency, auditory discrimination and listening skills.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
Activities must be provided which:	
1. Enrich the child's capacity for verbal communication from using simple language forms: sound, words, and basic grammatical structure to using elaborated language in the forms of simple description, narration, and exploration.	• Discriminates between and produces the speech sounds of English in the context of words. • Uses the names of objects in his immediate surrounding. • Uses common words of action (walk, run, jump, climb),of feelings

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
	(sad, scared, tired, angry) and of description (pretty, round, small, loud).
	• Uses simple sentences.
2. Extend children's repetoire of words and meanings about objects, events, and ideas.	• Begins to understand that a single word can have more than one meaning such as "sheet" of paper or for the bed; "orange" for color or fruit ; "paint," as a noun and a verb.
	• Begins to understand that different words can have the same meaning such as "car"-"automobile," "ship"-"boat," or "bag"-"sack."
	• Uses nouns with preceding modifiers ("my mother's car" or "some big boys"), and modified by a prepositional phrase ("the food on the table").
	• Begins using relational terms (longer or shorter) or more differentiated terms (wide, fat, tall, thin,) rather than being limited to general terms of big and little for all differences in size.
3. Use a variety of techniques for advancing children's language comprehension and usage in an atmosphere that encourages free verbal communication among children and between children and adults.	• Uses language effectively for communication with others.
	• Tells simple stories and gives information.
	• Asks questions for information.
	• Answers simple questions.
	• Participates in dramatic play.
4. Help the child with language growth which takes him/her from meanings which are situation-bound to meanings which are situation-free.	• Expresses sequence of things which happened or will happen.
	• Expresses yesterday-today relationships.
	• Expresses before-after events.
	• Uses words to express repetition (again), continuation (still) or completion (past tense).

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
5. Stimulate each child to use the language he/she has.	• Uses words in the generally correct order even if some words are missing (syntax or word order). • Uses the plural form and begins using past tense (morphology or word endings). • Uses common relational words such as prepositions, conjunctions, and comparatives.
6. Demonstrate the use of language frequently, with enjoyment and when appropriate.	• Overtly talks to himself as he engages in an activity, asking himself questions or directing himself. • Voluntarily participates in group discussions. • Narrates familiar stories to himself as if engaged in reading a book. • Sings aloud, rhymes, repeats nonsense syllables for their own sake.

C. Suggested Activities

1. Conversation with children by staff, parents, other children in either classroom, home, or community settings may take the form of talks on real or imaginary telephone; talks with child during meals and quiet times about topics of current interest to him or her; classroom group time and bed-time discussions that encourage children to recall and describe past events, people and places; elaborations of experience in process such as block play, sand play and field trips.

2. Dramatic play by children, individually or in groups, indoors or outdoors may take the form of role-plays in the dramatic play area of the classroom that are stimulated by adult-provided props, such as picnics, shopping, and barber shop; situations to dramatize which are suggested by parents at home or staff in centers.

3. Reading experiences with children at home and school may take the form of story groups of 1-4 children occurring simultaneously in the classroom with several adults reading various books aloud, naming and asking child to name objects in a realistic picture book; use of books chosen for new vocabulary, and introduction of subjects for discussion.

4. Music experiences with children at home or school may take the form of nursery rhymes and songs that are repetitious in their sounds, words, and phrases so that children can readily take pleasure in repeating them; open-ended songs which require the child to create their own verses; listening to records and asking child to describe pitch (high or low), tempo (fast or slow), rhythm.

Pre-Reading/Pre-writing Skills

Basic Principles

1. Reading experiences provide the child with experiential encounters with beauty, the dramatic, the imaginative, the physical world, other people and cultures toward the extension and/or widening of his/her own experiences.

2. Reading experiences contribute to language development by exposing the child to new language patterns, sounds, words, phrases, and a sense of style.

3. Children must be encouraged to increasingly seek literature as a source of enjoyment. Reading experiences need to be related to the child's curiosity about his or her world, since a positive attitude toward reading (for enjoyment and relevant information).

4. Learning to read is a complex task. Activities for antecedent reading ability include visual perception to differentiate form and shape, auditory perception for differentiation of sound, conceptual skills for understanding content and translating the spoken word into symbols.

5. Reading makes the child aware of the spoken word in symbolized fashion.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
Activities must be provided that:	
1. Provide children with the recognition that writing carries a relevant message.	• Asks what a word or label signifies. • Pretends to follow along as adult reads or child fantasy-plays "reading". • Draws, scribbles, designs, symbols, letters, words, in that order.
2. Provide children with an awareness of language structure.	• "Plays" with words, as in rhyming nonsense syllables. • Repeats adult or literary phrases and sentence patterns. • Generalizes grammatical rules, as in formation of plurals and gerunds.
3. Provide children with an awareness of units of sound, or auditory perception.	• Articulates all the sounds of English. • Hears initial letter sounds.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
	• Identifies the number of syllables in a word with rhythm.
4. Refine children's visual perception.	• Differentiates characteristics such as shape and position.
	• Recognizes invariance or constancy.
	• Discriminates between figure and ground.
5. Help children work gradually toward recognition of the symbols designating words.	• Names pictures.
	• Recognizes some letters of the alphabet.
	• Recognizes simple words and names.

Suggested Activities

1. Word experiences with children, parents, and staff in the classroom, home and community may take the form of repetition by the parent of enjoyable stories that have been read at school, encouragement for the child to fill in learned portions; asking the child to identify labels and packages by picture, symbol or word; writing the child's own words describing art work, telling stories, and recalling experiences.

2. Experiences with pictures at home and in school may take the form of location by the child of a named item in a complex design or picture; storytelling by the child from a set of related pictures; asking the child to recognize pictures or objects which, when named, share an initial letter sound.

3. Experiences with manipulative materials at home or school may take the form of making marks on paper - scribbling, designing, outlining, etc.; matching shapes to identical shapes, as in puzzles, lotto games; selecting proper lids for pots and pans.

4. Music experiences with children at home or school may take the form of singing, rhythmic expression (clap, beat a drum, etc.) every time a certain sound, word is uttered during a song; records; call and response singing.

Mathematics Skills

Basic Principles

1. Mathematics is basically a mental operation. The nature of mathematics is tied in with the human need to establish order in the environment as some kind of mathematical conceptualization about time, space, quantity, number, distance, weight, and volume.

2. The preschool math program should prepare the child to develop the mental structures which are the prerequisites for specific mathematical facts and logical reasoning. Language, reading and math development are closely related and can develop sequentially.

3. As the young child chants, "one, two, three" he or she is using numbers but is not really counting. The words do not have mathematical meaning until the child uses this counting to solve a problem.

4. Mathematical knowledge and understanding result from concrete experiences (home, classroom, and natural environment). While no formal period needs to be scheduled for teaching number concepts; activities are planned and organized so that teaching is developed through incidental experiences. The understanding of math concepts can be developed through observation, description, sorting, measuring, weighing.

5. Before a child learns arithmetic, he/she should experience adding and subtracting with concrete objects. Generally, the set approach to learning number concepts has been found useful in preschool and as a foundation for later mathematical understanding and computational skills.

6. Mathematical learning for the four year old can include one-to-one correspondence, set relationships such as more or less, number representations, classifying.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
Activities must be provided that:	
1. Stimulate children to organize their experiences (as they occur incidentally, or pre-planned for them) in terms of relationships and conceptual dimensions: classes of objects, similarities and differences; comparative size, amount, degree; orientation in time and space.	• Identifies littlest, biggest, and middle-sized object. • Uses the concept and words about the past, present, and future. • Groups objects because they look alike in at least one way, according to color, function, size, shape or number.
2. Work gradually toward the children's recognition of the symbols for designating numbers.	• Uses number words. • Recognizes same number of symbols. • Is aware that numbers can represent things. • Acquires vocabulary of number names.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
	• Uses quantitative words correctly, such as all, more, etc.
3. Work gradually toward the children's ability to order objects according to a particular attribute.	• Perceives parts and the whole. • Understands sequence. • Can reverse sequence.
4. Provide children with the numerical understandings needed for the later techniques and skills of computation.	• Achieves one-to-one correspondence. • Recognizes small groups without counting, such as 2's, 3's, 4's • Extends counting concept "how many" and "how many more or less" to objects in the environment.
5. Providing varied opportunities for children's active participation, independent choices, experimentation and problem-solving within the context of an organized setting and program.	• Knows that an object could be in a number of places even if out of sight. • Understands the relationship among objects in space, as in stacking blocks. • Has a sense of height, weight, distance, time, speed.

Suggested Activities

1. Language experiences with children by staff and parents in either classroom, home, or community can take the form of rhyming words in pairs, finger plays and songs that employ counting; discussions that involve comparing, contrasting groups of objects (blocks, utensils, etc.) according to size and shape; numbers reading in charts, recipes, television, etc.; stories that involve number, such as The Three Bears, Ten in a Family.

2. Experiences with manipulative materials at home or school may take the form of counting situations with beads, buttons, cookies, napkins, chairs, etc.; water play and sand play that involve weighing and measuring capacity; use ruler and yardstick in woodworking or other activities; use clock to determine actions.

3. Nutrition experiences at home or in school may take the form of sharing in terms of "half an apple", "a whole cookie", "a quarter sandwich"; cooking or preparation of cocoa, jello, or cookies by children using measuring cups and spoons; measuring milk or juice from quarts to fractional parts in cups or glasses for lunch; setting the table by children which involves determining number of places, quantity of milk, silverware, napkins, etc.

4. Music experiences at home or in school may take the form of discussions of shape and size of small musical instruments; responses by the children with instruments or clapping, etc. to different rhythmic time patterns.

5. Dramatic play experiences at home or in school may take the form of telephone dialing of specific written numbers series; children's use of imaginary or "play" money to pay for groceries, transportation, lunch where adults facilitate counting and identification of coins and bills.

Science/Problem-solving Skills

Basic Principles

1. Science should be viewed more as a "skill" than a "content subject" of scientific information, concepts, and principles. The child's focus is on "doing" or learning "how to learn" about the world, both physical and social, and on developing what are called scientific attitudes and values, such as creativity, intellectual honesty, respect for evidence, willingness to experiment, and a questioning attitude.

2. Science problem-solving leads to learning and conceptualization. A science program encourages children to formulate generalizations as they go from the specific to the general. Science education in early childhood is viewed as experience which will lead to a sound understanding of basic scientific concepts later in school life.

3. Science is a natural way to enhance and encourage children's curiosity. It should be a zestful, creative, human experience where children freely observe, inquire, investigate, experiment, discover, interpret, and communicate about their world.

4. Preschool age children learn largely through the sensori-motor modes of sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and body movement. These important means of the child's exploration are considered in the science curriculum.

5. The science curriculum should emphasize basic pre-science concepts of the physical world including, object permanence, time and spatial relations, conservation, numeration, classification and causality.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
Activities must be provided which:	
1. Recognize and provide for the young child's basic impulses to explore and investigate the physical environment.	• Describes what he/she perceives. • Compares objects on the basis of similarities and differences. • Groups objects according to a single criterion and later according to 2 or more.

Required Aspects	Child Outcomes
2. Increase knowledge of things in the child's world by stimulating observation and providing for manipulative-constructive activities.	• Makes careful observations using the 5 senses. • Remembers and can re-enact procedures or experiments. • Shares perceptions or records data by drawing (pictures), building (models), describing (stories).
3. Stimulate children's curiosity in important scientific advances of the world around them.	• Asks questions, such as "why?" and "what is it?", etc. • Dramatizes in play how things work, live, grow, etc. • Uses pictures and models as informational resources.
4. Increase children's understanding of the relationship between cause and effect.	• Identifies a sequence of 2 or 3 events. • Makes guesses. • Makes inferences based on perceptions. • Makes predictions based on data.
5. Increase children's understanding of measurement.	• Compares sizes (big-small, long-short). • Records distance using a standard length (stick, string, etc.) • Equalizes a balance.

Suggested Activities

1. Language experiences at home and in school may take the form of using picture books for factual materials; looking at pictures and hearing stories of people who work with machines; playing guessing games like "What's Missing?" "Which Hand Has It?" "Which Is More?"

2. Experiences with manipulative materials at home and school may take the form of experimenting with magnets, noticing what they will and will not attract, trying to pick up paper, corks, nails, paper clips, sponge; learning about balance in building with blocks; running wheel toys up and down inclined boards; opening and closing gates with various types of fastenings (padlocks, hook and eye, bolts) and trying out many kinds of locks.

3. Experiences with water at home and in school may take the form of dissolving things in water (salt, sugar cube) and watching salt and crystals form as salt water evaporates; experimenting with faucets, sprinklers, hose in garden; mixing colored clay or dough for playhouse cooking, stirring paint powder with water, watching food dye change color of water, and mixing soapsuds for finger painting.

4. Experiences with dramatic play at home and in school may take the form of dramatizing (with toy replicas of such machines) people at work, using this equipment in sandbox or digging area; dramatizing gas station activity--life-size gas pump, hose, oil cans, tool kits, overalls and caps, tricycles, cars; using a variety of kitchen utensils for playhouse cooking with water, sand, beans, rice, cornmeal, seed pods; washing doll clothes, hanging them on clothes rack or line, washing play dishes in dishpan.

5. Experiences with cooking at home and in school may take the form of making chocolate pudding--measuring milk in measuring cup, pouring in chocolate powder and using egg beater to beat mixture, spooning it in cups and tasting it; watching as dough is mixed for cookies, then cutting out and placing cookies on baking tins and watching the baking process, eating cookies; preparation of food, e.g., butter, ice cream, snack, etc.

6. Experiences with nature both indoors and outdoors may take the form of watching insects, snails, sow bugs, etc., in garden or outdoors; feeding guinea pigs, rats, mice, rabbits, chickens, ducks, etc.; rooting potatoes, seeds, air plants; crawling, jumping, climbing, balancing, throwing balls, etc.; watching wind blowing leaves on trees, etc.; taking a walk to look for specific things like rock, mud puddle, etc.; flying a kite; noticing changes in temperature with rise and fall of mercury.

Criteria for Selection of Head Start Basic Educational Skills Research and Demonstration Pilot Project Sites

Criteria to Determine Applicant Eligibility

I. A. Grantee must operate a center based Head Start program for at least eight months per year.

B. Head Start classrooms and centers proposed for participation in this project must feed into no more than two elementary schools and they must be in the same school district.

C. Grantee must have a program that will enroll at least sixty children four years of age who will enter kindergarten in the fall of 1980 in Phase II. If the grantee classrooms and centers proposed for participation during 1978 do not have at least 60 children four years of age who are expected to enter kindergarten the following year, the grantee must indicate as part of its application a willingness and specific plans to bring this about by the end of Phase I.

D. Grantee or delegate agencies must not be participating in any other Head Start research, demonstration or evaluation efforts that might confound this project's evaluation and research findings. The Head Start centers must not be involved with elementary schools participating in Project Follow Through.

Criteria for Proposal Review

II. A. Grantee must agree to serve as a replicable model for other sites. (This might entail many visitors and observers to the program, distribution of program materials, and other activities.)

B. Grantee must be in compliance or shall have provided an acceptable plan for being in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and must have a stated education philosophy, plan and curriculum, and an actively functioning Policy Council.

C. Grantee must demonstrate their capacity to provide an exemplary program of basic educational skills in each of the four program elements outlined in the guidelines (refer to guidelines, page 11) and have an education curriculum that focuses on developmentally appropriate Basic Educational Skills that are compatible with Head Start philosophy. Preference will be given to classroom staff holding a CDA credential, a BA in early childhood education and relevant field experience or who are participating in CDA training.

D. The grantee must submit a letter of commitment from feeder elementary schools indicating an interest in the Basic Educational Skills program and a willingness to actively participate in all four elements in Phase II.

E. Grantee must have an education curriculum that focuses on developmentally appropriate Basic Educational Skills that are compatible with Head Start philosophy.

Grantees must, nationwide, represent a mix of urban and rural programs, ethnic and racial backgrounds, sponsoring agencies, such as private and non-profit agencies, public schools, limited purpose agencies, and community action agencies.